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BRITISH EMBASSY,

CARACAS.

March 29, 1961

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GUARD

TOP SECRET AND
PERSONAL

My dear Henry,

We, and I expect you, are receiving what I regard as rather disquieting reports about activities against Cuba. The disquieting feature of these reports is not that Cuban anti-Castro forces appear to be planning a descent on the island (that is their affair), but that massive and pretty well overt U.S. co-operation seems to be envisaged and that in some cases at least the expeditions would apparently start from the continental United States, and might receive overt support from the Guantánamo base.

I am bound to express the view that if such an invasion were conducted, even if it resulted in the establishment of a democratic régime in Cuba, the results in this country at any rate would be disastrous, since it would be a clear example of U.S. interference with another Government.

I do not of course mean by this that Castroism is popular with the Venezuelan Government, but it is certainly less unpopular than the previous dictatorial régime in Cuba and in my view the United States must keep as clear as possible of the sort of action apparently contemplated.

It would be less offensive if the entire operation were managed from Guatemala, and if United States support were kept right in the background.

Above all I sincerely trust that there is no possibility whatsoever of any part of the invasion being mounted from a British Island, say, in the Bahamas. If it were, there would be an anti-British howl over the whole of South America.

As you know, public enemy No. 1 here is the Dominican Republic and the Venezuelan Government would certainly welcome the fall of the present dictator, but if this could only be accomplished by the pretty well overt use of force by the United States, the Venezuelan Government would feel exceedingly unhappy. They would be torn between jubilation over the fall of Trujillo and dislike of U.S. interference and the latter sentiment might win in public.

Finally, whatever the Venezuelan Government may think, the local communists and other left-wingers would make all the trouble they could if United States interference is obvious.

The Hon. R.A.A. Hankey, C.M.G., C.V.O.,
American Department,
Foreign Office,
London, S.W.1.

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I drafted the foregoing myself; a tactful
Chancery have now called my attention to our letter to
American Department 1031/600 of September 21 last, which
I had not seen before. This does not conflict with
my views and I set them before you again, because I am
increasingly disquieted.

Yours ever,

D.L. Busk
(D.L. Busk)

TOP SECRET